

Facing a Chilling Reality

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The recent ice storm that swept through southwest Missouri was a rude awakening for many of us who simply weren't prepared. You may have had an emergency kit and some bottled water, but were you prepared to be without electricity for up to two weeks? Did you expect to find store shelves bare when you went for last minute supplies? Were you prepared to have your children out of school for a week?

The ice storm delivered a chilling reality that forces us to face up to the truth – as a community, we are not prepared. The good news is we can change that today.

Ready in 3, a program from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, says we can be better prepared to face a disaster with three simple steps.

1. Create a plan.
2. Prepare a kit.
3. Listen for information.

Create a Plan

What will your family do when disaster strikes? Will you stay home or seek shelter? Do you know how to reach each other if you are separated? Do you have alternate routes for getting to your home, business, daycare or school? Do you have a meeting place where family members can gather in an emergency? Does each family member have a phone number for a local contact and an out-of-area contact? Do you have backup sources for heat or electricity? Do you have cash set aside?

Prepare a Kit

In an emergency, you may lose utilities like electricity, heat and water. Your kit should contain at least one gallon of water per person for each day of the disaster. You should also pack a flashlight, batteries, a battery-powered radio and non-perishable food. Add a first-aid kit and any prescription medications you might need. Keep all this in a container that is easy to carry, and store it in a safe, dry place.

Listen for Information

Local, state and federal officials have emergency plans in place. In a disaster it is important that you follow their instructions. Make sure you have a battery-powered radio tuned to a credible news source, so you will hear the latest information from community leaders.

Take steps today to make sure your family and your community are better prepared to weather the next disaster. Create a plan, prepare a kit, and be ready to listen for information. The time you take to prepare now may save your life.

To learn more about how you can be **Ready in 3**, contact the Springfield-Greene County Health Department at 417-864-1658 or go online to www.dhss.mo.gov.